

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in the application. Claims 1-6 have been amended to clarify the recitations without narrowing the scope thereof. Further, claims 7 and 8 have been newly added. These claims are submitted to be patentable based upon the recitations thereof.

Reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the pending application in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating allowable subject matter in claim 5 and 6.

Applicants would also like to thank the Examiner for accepting the drawings filed on September 24, 2003, for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document, and for considering all of the documents submitted in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on December 23, 2003.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kotaka (Japanese Patent Publication No. 2003-011169). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for at least the following reasons.

Applicants claim priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 based upon Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-278352, filed September 25, 2002. Applicants have attached hereto a verified English language translation of the aforementioned priority document, and submit that it provides support for all of the claimed subject matter.

Kotaka was published on January 15, 2003, which is after Applicants' foreign priority date of September 25, 2002. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Kotaka is not a

P24305.A02

prior art reference against the present application.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1-4 is improper, and respectfully request withdrawal thereof.


Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Entry and consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate. Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present invention in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures: Verified English language translation of
Japanese Application No. 2002-278352